

# Landscape & Visual Briefing Note

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Project: North East Aylsham (7138)

March 2020

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1. It is understood that Westmere Homes, are promoting land at North East Aylsham within the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) for a residential-led development, to include a school and other supporting infrastructure as well as a new riverside country park – Hereafter referred to as the ‘Site’.
- 1.2. The Site has been assessed within the GNLP Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) – December 2017. The Site, known as ‘Next to River Bure’ - ref **GNLP0336**, of approximately 21.34 hectares, is proposed for Approx. 300 dwellings, a Neighbourhood Centre to include community and retail uses, a Primary School, public open spaces, play areas, a Riverside Country Park and new footpath links. The HELAA provides a site suitability conclusion as;

*“This is a large site of 21 ha to the north of an existing allocation AYL2 (Bure Meadows) on the east of the Town. There are no absolute constraints but to be developed to its full extent of circa 300 homes would require mitigations. The main issues relate to access and management of surface water flood risk to part of the site. Access mitigations are likely to include new junctions connections associated to Burgh Road and A140, as well as connections to the Town Centre. Whilst generally in Flood Zone 1, the site encroaches on the river floodplain on its northern and north-eastern edges reducing the net developable area. The site is concluded as suitable for the land availability assessment.”*

- 1.3. Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd has been commissioned to review potential landscape and visual matters and provide an overview of any likely landscape constraints and opportunities present within the Site. A desktop study and site visit have been undertaken alongside a high level review of the landscape and visual situation to assist the masterplanning of development within the site and include any necessary landscape mitigation that may be required.

## 2 Baseline Assessment

- 2.1. The Site lies adjacent to the north eastern edge of the market town of Aylsham, approximately 18.4km to the north of Norfolk. The Site comprises of two distinct parts, the lower lying northern area located along and around the River Bure and Disused Canal, with the southern part formed of a large arable field bound for the majority by mature hedgerow and mature hedgerow trees and on gently rising landform. Refer **Plan ASP 3** Site Location & **Plan ASP 4** Site and Setting Plan.

### Vegetation Cover

- 2.2. Vegetation internally is, for the most part, limited as a result of the predominantly arable land use. Within the northern part of the Site there is an element of typical riparian vegetation along the watercourses and some remnant field hedgerows. The vegetation within the southern part of the Site is restricted to the field boundaries, with notable vegetation belt along the eastern boundary providing an established landscape buffer between the Site and adjacent A140. This provides a degree of separation between the Site and immediate, local and wider, more rural, landscape to the east. The northern and western field boundaries are defined by mature hedgerow and hedgerow trees.

### Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 2.3. There is a single PRoW of note within the local area – Weaver’s Way Long Distance Route that runs west to east within the local landscape to the north of the Site - Refer to **ASP2** Site and Setting.

### Landscape Related Policy

- 2.4. The Site is covered by the adopted Broadland District Council Local Plan, Broadland's current local plan is made up of several documents:
- Joint Core Strategy DPD (Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk) adopted 2011, amendments adopted January 2014
  - Development Management DPD adopted August 2015
  - Site Allocations DPD adopted May 2016
  - Growth Triangle Area Action Plan adopted July 2016
  - Neighbourhood Plan
- 2.5. At present the GNLP is being produced by Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council working together with Norfolk County Council through the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP). This will help meet local housing and economic growth needs, whilst also protecting and enhancing the environment. As mentioned above the Site is identified within the evidence base HELAA - ref **Next to river Bure - GNLP0336**. The Draft GNLP site allocations considers the Site as a ‘Reasonable Alternative’ site beyond the Preferred Housing Allocation - **POLICY GNLP0311, 0595 and 2060 Land south of Burgh Road and west of the A140, Aylsham (approx. 12.86 ha) is allocated for residential development. The site is likely to accommodate at least 300 homes, 33% of which will be affordable, and new primary school.**
- 2.6. The site is not subject to any national or local qualitative landscape designations.

### Landscape Character

- 2.7. The Broadland District Council Landscape Character Assessment – September 2013 - identifies that the site as being located within Landscape Character Type (LCT) E: ‘Wooded Estatelands’ and then, at a more local level, within the Landscape Character Area (LCA) E2: ‘Marsham and Hainford Wooded Estatelands’.

2.8. The Landscape Guidelines for the LCA are that of relevance to the site are:

- ***“Seek to conserve and enhance the landscape structure within the area, including woodland, copses of woodland, mature trees associated with small halls and manors and intact hedgerows;***
- ***Seek to ensure the sensitive location of development involving further tall structures (such as steel pylons and telecommunication masts) in relation to prominent skyline locations both within the character area and within adjacent character areas;***
- ***Seek to conserve the landscape setting of historic halls, manors and churches;***
- ***Seek to promote use of local vernacular buildings materials;***
- ***Seek to ensure new development does not reduce the vertical significance of important historical and architectural features within the landscape, such as church towers.***

#### The Visual Environment

2.9. An initial Site visit has been undertaken and the Photographic Record is appended to this briefing note. Views of the Site are relatively localised as a result of the gently undulating valley landform within the Site and the immediate landscape to the east, in combination with the mature vegetation structure to include field boundaries and woodland blocks, and existing built form, which includes the recent residential development adjacent to the southern site boundary.

2.10. Views of the Site are for the most part restricted to the immediate setting, being evident from the recent development edge to the south of Site - Viewpoint (VP) 1 and associated open space - VP2. Further views are possible from Dunkirk road which bounds the northern Site boundary - VP3 and glimpsed views from the north eastern corner of the Site from the A140 - VP4. Beyond these locations there are potential views over the Site from the residential and commercial properties further to the west along Dunkirk. Where the landform rises to the north east (VP5) and to the south east (VP10) there would be potential views of development within the Site, however, any development would be seen in the context of the recent development to the immediate south of the Site which is located on slightly high landform. Views from the wider landscape to the east are heavily restricted by the combination of landform and intervening mature vegetation (VP6-9).

2.11. Overall given the size of the Site, it is visually well enclosed from the surrounding landscape and there are clear opportunities to reinforce the degree of enclosure.

### **3 Landscape and Visual Review and Opportunities & Constraints**

3.1. With a development of this type and scale there is a risk of adverse landscape and visual effects if the proposals are not carefully and sympathetically designed. However, it is envisaged that the development of this Site will adopt a high quality, landscape-led approach ensuring that the proposals will be integrated without significant adverse effects upon the receiving landscape character or visual environment.

3.2. It is proposed that the development of the Site is phased, with two potential options.

- Option 1: Comprising of up to 300 units (whole site)

- Option 2: the first phase to include 150-dwelling.
- 3.3. Both Options 1 & 2 will deliver the proposed community benefits, to include school, scouts, allotments, country park should be developed as part of the combined phasing, with the details established to potentially be delivered within the first phase. Refer **Plan ASP 1** Development Framework Plans – Option 1, **Plan ASP 2** Development Framework Plans Option 2 & Plan CPP – Country Park Enhancements Plan.
  - 3.4. AS demonstrated, the proposed development should be limited to the central and southern portion of the Site, incorporating a network of publicly accessible open spaces that include multi-use routes that provide connections through the Site, linking with the existing settlement and the wider countryside. This would not only assist in provision of formal and informal recreation facilities but break up the built environment and assist in placemaking.
  - 3.5. The northern part of the Site should form a country park, focused around the River Bure, one that has a ‘semi-natural’ feel creating new, varied habitats that are characteristic of this landscape setting and are wildlife focused and not for amenity. In particular, retain and enhance the existing riparian and field boundary vegetation, to include the hedgerow and trees, tree belts and woodland within the layout, this would provide an established landscape setting for the new development from the outset. The proposed landscape strategy for the Site should include additional tree and woodland planting to reinforce the presence of this characteristic local landscape feature and to increase connectivity between the existing habitats off Site, especially along the river corridor to the east. All additional structural landscape planting should be native and where possible be of local provenance, to include orchards and areas of species rich wildflower meadow.
  - 3.6. The development itself should incorporate a simple palette of materials and architectural detailing that reflect the local vernacular. Adopting a positive outward looking layout to ensure that the proposals do not appear to be turning their back on the wider setting and create an appropriate transition between the built environment and wider landscape;
  - 3.7. The assessment of landscape opportunities and constraints will feed into the emerging masterplan to ensure that a sympathetic layout that respects its landscape and visual context can be achieved.

## **4 Potential Development Sites**

- 4.1. At present there are no allocated sites within or around Aylsham, however, there are a number of sites, that combined form a preferred option – Policy GNLP0311, 0595 & 2060 – Land south of Burgh Road and west of the A140, Aylsham. The sites combined are approximately 12.86ha in size and are allocated for residential development of at least 300 homes with 33% affordable and a new primary school.
- 4.2. The preferred sites and the Site are for the most part comparable, both consisting for the majority of arable land with little internal vegetation and bound to the east by the A140 road corridor. With regards to the effects arising from the preferred sites and the Site, development within both would be located within and against the existing settlement edge, at approximately 20m AOD. The existing mature vegetation along the A140 provides a strong degree of enclosure to the both sites from the local and wider landscape to the south and east.

- 4.3. In terms of potential views over the two sites from the immediate site boundaries. Both lie within and adjacent to the existing settlement edge, which allows for residential views over both sites. Views from PRow are restricted as a result of limited number of routes within the area, however, the Bure Valley Path Long Distance Route runs along the southern boundary of the preferred sites, therefore any development within this area is likely to have a significant impact on the setting and views from this route.
- 4.4. The Aylsham Conservation Area lies adjacent to the north western Site boundary; however, this part of the Site will form a country park, focused along the River Bure and disused canal. As a result any proposed development would be located some distance to the east of the Conservation Area.
- 4.5. Overall, it is considered that there is little difference between either the Preferred Sites or the Site.

## 5 Summary

- 5.1. As set out above, the Site is not subject to any qualitative landscape designations and is located adjacent to the existing settlement edge to the north and south. The gently undulating landform, along with mature vegetation structure that characterises the Site's setting and existing built form will assist the integration of future proposed built form within the Site.
- 5.2. In addition, the adoption of a sensitive, landscape-led approach to the design development of the proposals would ensure that the proposals can be successfully integrated in this location without significant adverse landscape or visual effects.
- 5.3. Due to the nature of the current arable uses, the extent/condition of mature vegetation associated with the field boundaries and the existing components within the Site are of relatively limited landscape value. The most notable being the riparian features associated with the River Bure and disused canal within the north of the Site, there are clear opportunities for landscape enhancements.
- 5.4. As part of an iterative design process the defining characteristics of the local landscape and Site context will inform the proposed layout to provide a cohesive development that responds sensitively to the existing landscape character and provide localised and wider landscape enhancements.
- 5.5. It is considered that the Site has the capacity to accommodate a sensitively designed residential led development, that includes a school, supporting infrastructure and country park, which would not give rise to significant landscape or visual effects and is in line with adopted planning policy and the Broadland Landscape Character Assessment. Proposed development would not be out of context and presents opportunities to improve access to the countryside and recreational facilities, enhance the local and wider landscape and improve biodiversity through habitat creation.
- 5.6. It is considered that subject to the inclusion of the landscape elements outlined above, development on the site can be accommodated in this location without detriment to the localised or wider visual amenity and that the integrity of the receiving landscape character will be preserved, with proposed landscape features contributing positively to the identified wider landscape character.

Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd

13<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Enclosed:

**Plan ASP 1** Development Framework Plans – Option 1

**Plan ASP 2** Development Framework Plans Option 2

**Plan CPP** Country Park Enhancement Plan

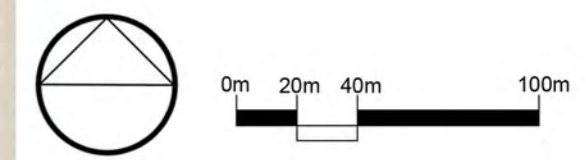
**Plan ASP3** Site Location

**Plan ASP4** Site and Setting Plan

Viewpoint Locations & Photographic Record



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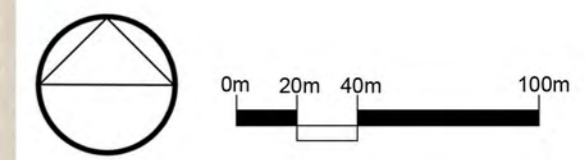
- Key:
- Site Boundary
  - Bure Meadows Route
  - Informal Mown Paths
  - Proposed Native Tree Planting
  - Woodland Tree Planting
  - Wildflower and Tussocky Grassland
  - Primary School
  - Development Area
  - Allotment Area
  - Scout Hut Area
  - Pedestrian Links
  - Flood Zone 2
  - Flood Zone 3
  - Primary Roads
  - Secondary Roads
  - Main Vehicular Access



REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				
<b>TITLE</b> Aylsham Development Framework Plan - Option 1 300 Dwellings deliverable in 2 phases				
<b>CLIENT</b> Westmere Homes				
SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D	
1:2500@A2	MAR 2020	SB	CJ	
DRAWING NUMBER		REVISION		
7138/ ASP1 - Option 1				



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- Key:
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  - Primary School
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  - Flood Zone 2
  - Flood Zone 3
  - Primary Roads
  - Secondary Roads
  - Main Vehicular Access



Timber footbridge river crossing

Wetland & Wildlife Area

Existing track upgraded

New Public Open Space (within flood zone area)

Additional Attenuation Pond to serve new development

New footpath (approved Bure Meadows route)

Existing Attenuation Pond

Link to Aylsham Academy

Primary School (2Ha)

Scout Hut Area (0.35ha)

Allotment Area (0.15ha)

Link to Town centre

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				

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TITLE  
 Aylsham  
 Development Framework Plan - Option 2  
 150 Dwellings delivered in single phase

CLIENT  
 Westmere Homes

SCALE 1:2500@A2	DATE MAR 2020	DRAWN SB	CHK'D CJ
DRAWING NUMBER 7138/ ASP1 - Option 2	REVISION		

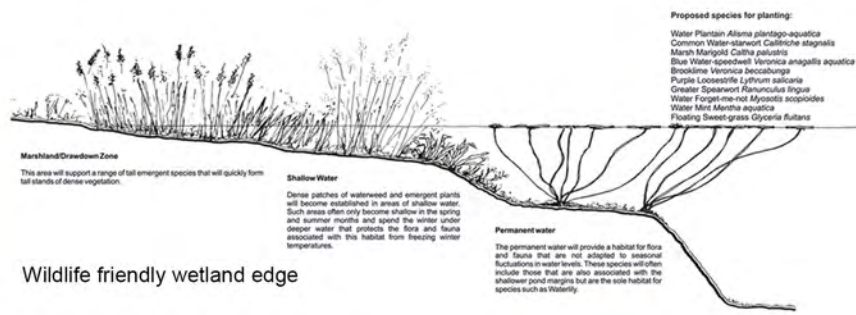




Areas left open for species rich wildflower areas and margins seek to create a wide variety of habitats



Example image of mawn grass paths



Wildlife friendly wetland edge



Example image of country park and wetland landscape

Indicative visualisation to illustrate potential elements within the open space



Example images of wetland habitat



Creation of low disturbance areas with native shrub planting such as Blackthorn to deter dog entry/access

Timber boardwalk bridge to provide access through country park and connectivity of the Bure Meadows route

Country park created within the River Bure flood plan to provide a wetland and wildflower area. Use of appropriate native wetland species including Willow, Alder and Birch as well as wetland, wildflower meadow and Tussocky grassland will create habitat opportunities and biodiversity enhancements



Example of country park and boardwalk bridges that could be incorporated to improve connections

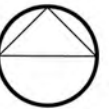
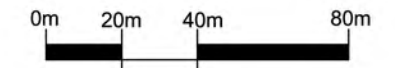


Indicative visualisation showing how the pathways throughout the country park could be utilised.



Wetland tree species incorporated along river banks provide ecological and biodiversity enhancements

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Key:

- Site Boundary
- Bure Meadows Route
- Informal Mown Paths
- Proposed Native Tree Planting
- Woodland Tree Planting
- Wildflower and Tussocky Grassland

Ecology zone incorporating species rich wildflower meadows and tussocky grassland as well as reinforcement of existing field boundaries and site boundaries with new structural native planting to improve connectivity and provide biodiversity enhancements. Existing planting and ditch network to be retained for ecological benefits

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

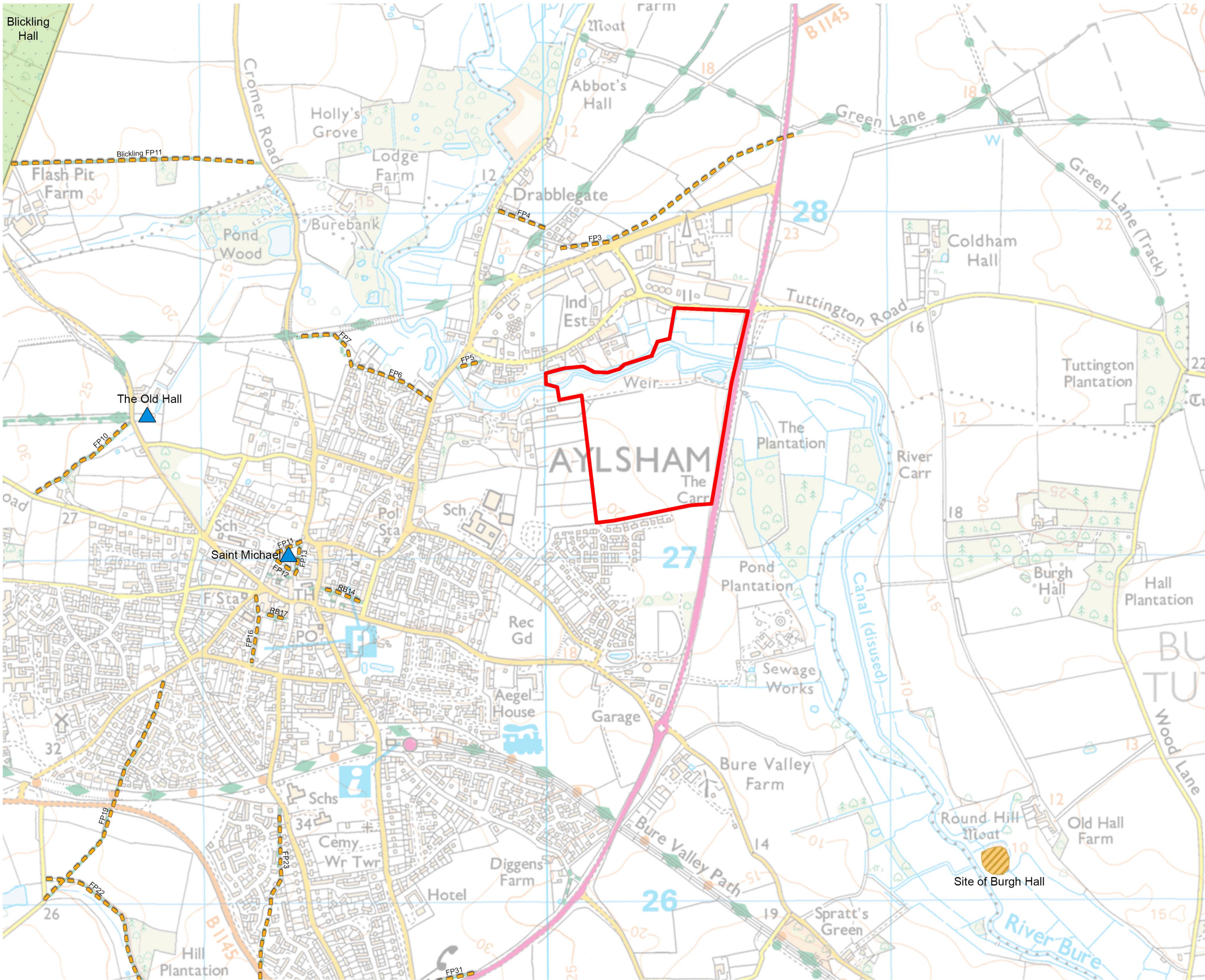
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TITLE  
 Aylsham  
 Country Park Enhancements Plan  
 CLIENT

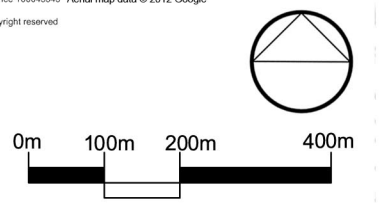
Westmere Homes

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
1:2000@A3	MAR 2020	SB	CJ
DRAWING NUMBER 7138 / CPP		REVISION	





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- Key:
- Application Site Boundary
  - Public Rights of Way
  - ▲ Listed Buildings
  - Scheduled Monuments
  - Listed Park and Garden

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

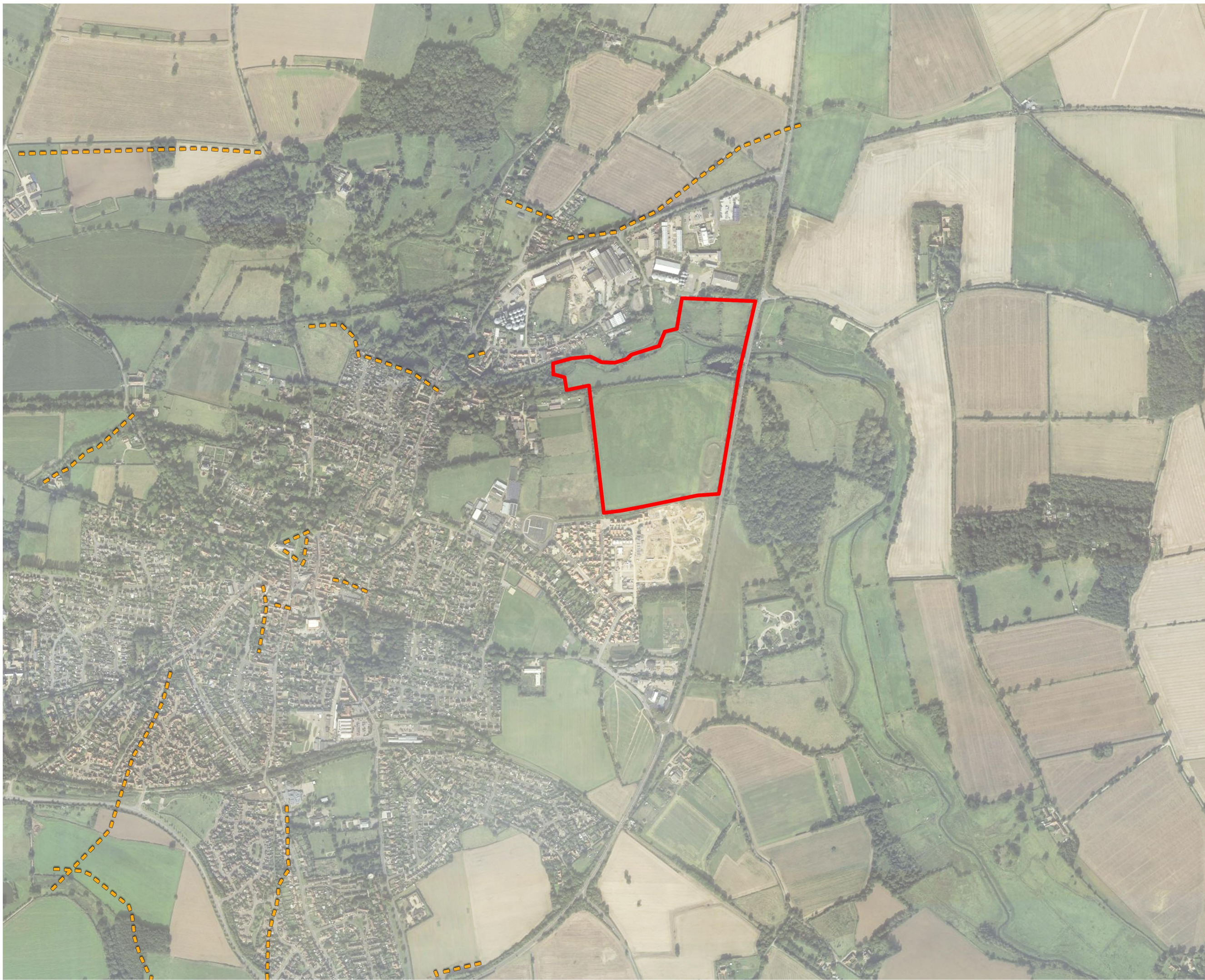
**aspect landscape planning**

TITLE  
 Land at NE Aylsham, Norfolk  
 Site Location Plan

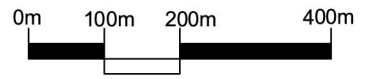
CLIENT  
 Westmere Homes

SCALE 1:10,000@A3	DATE MAR 2020	DRAWN NB	CHK'D SB
DRAWING NUMBER 7138/ASP3		REVISION	





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- Key:
- Application Site Boundary
  - Public Rights of Way

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				

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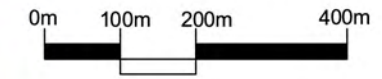
TITLE  
 Land at NE Aylsham, Norfolk  
 Site & Setting Plan




CLIENT  
 Westmere Homes

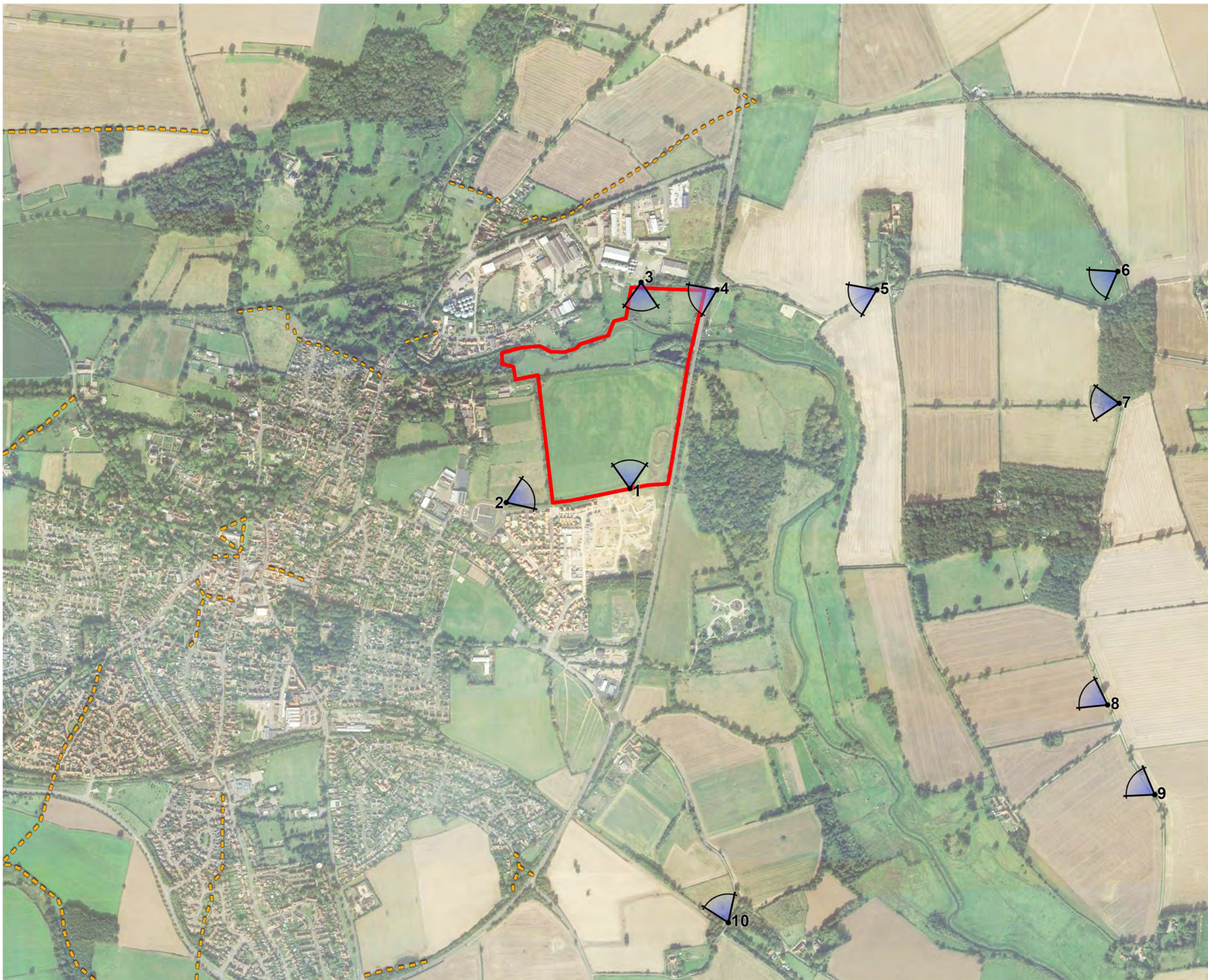
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DRAWING NUMBER 7138 / ASP4		REVISION	



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- Key:
-  Application Site Boundary
  -  Viewpoint Location
  -  Public Rights of Way



REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

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TITLE  
 Land at NE Aylsham, Norfolk  
 Viewpoint Location Plan

CLIENT  
 Westmere Homes

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
1:10,000 @ A3	MAR 2020	EL	BW
DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION		
7138 / VLP1			



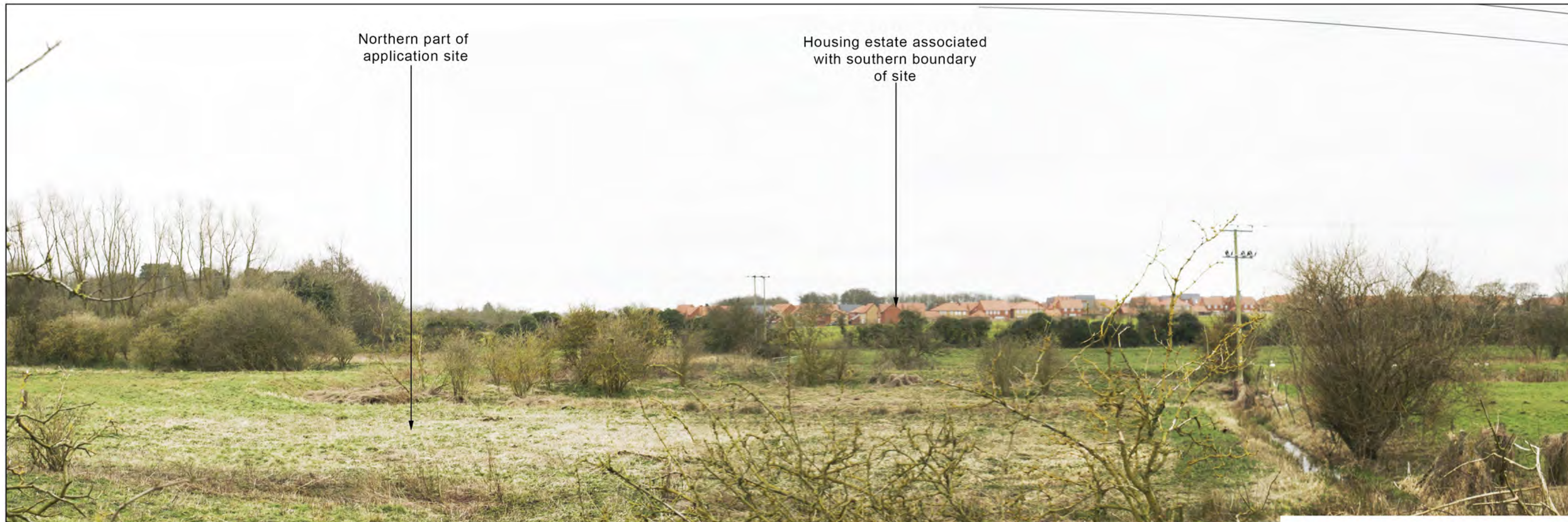


Viewpoint Coordinates: E 620296, N 327094 Date & time of photograph: 06/03/2020 14:09 AOD & Viewing height: c. 17m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 1**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 620027, N 327095 Date & time of photograph: 06/03/2020 14:12 AOD & Viewing height: c. 20m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 2**





Northern part of application site

Housing estate associated with southern boundary of site

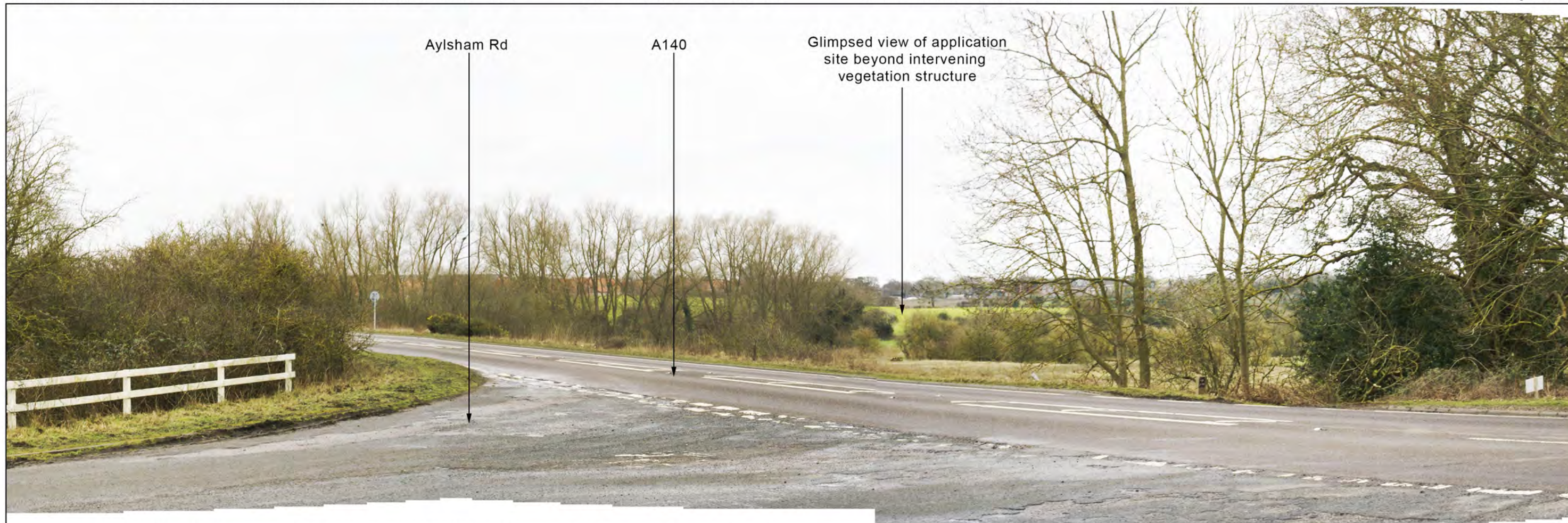
Viewpoint Coordinates: E 620389, N 327724

Date & time of photograph: 06/03/2020 14:07

AOD & Viewing height: c. 12m AOD 1.6m

Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.

**Viewpoint 3**



Aylsham Rd

A140

Glimpsed view of application site beyond intervening vegetation structure

Viewpoint Coordinates: E 620627, N 327737

Date & time of photograph: 06/03/2020 14:07

AOD & Viewing height: c. 11m AOD 1.6m

Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.

**Viewpoint 4**





Viewpoint Coordinates: E 621111, N 327715

Date & time of photograph: 06/03/2020 14:06

AOD & Viewing height: c. 16m AOD 1.6m

Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.

**Viewpoint 5**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 621772, N 327783

Date & time of photograph: 06/03/2020 14:04

AOD & Viewing height: c. 23m AOD 1.6m

Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.

**Viewpoint 6**





Viewpoint Coordinates: E 621769, N 327382    Date & time of photograph: 06/03/2020 14:06    AOD & Viewing height: c. 25m AOD 1.6m    Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.    **Viewpoint 7**



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 621752, N 326500    Date & time of photograph: 06/03/2020 14:04    AOD & Viewing height: c. 13m AOD 1.6m    Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility.    **Viewpoint 8**





KA Osborne LTD

Approximate extent of application site

Viewpoint Coordinates: E 621842, N 326317 Date & time of photograph: 06/03/2020 13:59 AOD & Viewing height: c. 15m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 9**



Bure Valley Farm

Housing estate associated with southern boundary of site

Approximate extent of application site

Viewpoint Coordinates: E 620654, N 325907 Date & time of photograph: 06/03/2020 13:55 AOD & Viewing height: c. 21m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. **Viewpoint 10**